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PANTHEISM IN NEO-HEGELIAN THOUGHT

by

W. PRESTON WARREN

An Essay based upon a dissertation
submitted to the Faculty of the
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I

PANTHEISM AND NEO-HEGELIAN PHILOSOPHY

The term 'pantheism' belongs to the period of modern philosophy and it is generally understood to imply religious opprobrium. Literally, it would seem to represent a form of theistic thought. Actually, it has been regarded as a variant of atheism. Few people have willingly had their philosophical views called pantheistic, and religious philosophers, in particular, have endeavored to avoid the stigma of 'pantheism' with conspicuous alacrity. Yet there have been some avowed and even enthusiastic claimants for the title.

The significance of this term, however, is by no means certain. Meaning genetically 'all is God', it has been used to designate not only every highly monistic system of thought which emphasizes the conception of deity, but also views which are not so thoroughly monistic and even systems which offer no explicit recognition of a Supreme Being. Amid an extensive confusion of usage, two fairly specific meanings are, nevertheless, pre-eminent. The first equates the term with a philosophy of abstraction which identifies all reality with deity and conceives God as a Being, Principle, or Substance beyond every distinction of normal experience. The second designates as 'pantheistic' any philosophy which posits the reality of concrete existence but presents existence as a completely determined system within the divine nature. These are obvious types of pantheism, and possibly the only types which can be clearly distinguished. The semi-popular view that pantheism represents a complete immanence of the divine in a unified system of reality leaves out of account that a relative transcendence of God might mean that God is none the less integral to reality as a whole and that a view involving some conception of transcendence may be a form of pantheism.

The criteria of pantheism must, accordingly, be those implied by the types distinguished above. The truly obvious tests of pantheistic thought are the questions as to (1) whether a philosophical system posits any genuine existence apart from God, and (2) whether, if God is conceived as all-embracing, finite beings are regarded as having any essentially real freedom within the scheme of actuality. At first thought, this second test might seem unnecessary. If God is all-inclusive, how can free beings exist within his

nature? Ingenious have been the attempts, however, to harmonize the ideas of human freedom and the absoluteness of God. To do justice to these efforts we must appeal to our second criterion. It is the acid test of pantheistic thought, when reality is not conceived as fundamentally abstract.

Among the streams of thought to be called 'pantheistic' are the Hegelian and Neo-Hegelian philosophies. Their opponents have frequently labelled these views 'pantheism', and their advocates have anxiously endeavored to repudiate the title. It is the purpose of this study to inquire into the justice with which the term 'pantheism' may be used to characterize the Neo-Hegelian viewpoint. Two formulations of this philosophical perspective have been selected as the special objects of inquiry. The first is that of Edward Caird, one of the earliest and most orthodox Neo-Hegelians of Great Britain. The second is A. S. Pringle-Pattison's, a recent British philosopher who has earnestly endeavored to avoid the difficulties characteristic of the earlier forms of Neo-Hegelianism. Caird's philosophy will be our first concern, and we shall now apply our criteria to his thought.

II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDWARD CAIRD

In the first place, we must note that Caird distinguished his viewpoint from all the major forms of pantheism which he recognized. The objective pantheism of India in which thought "rose above all particular objects, even the highest, and confused them together in the one Being" is a type of philosophy to which he expressed emphatic opposition. Spinoza, seeking "the divine in an absolute substance which, indifferently, was conceived as either having an infinite number of attributes or none at all", was equally to be rejected because he confined reality to the blank oneness of substance. The Spencerian infinite "which is beyond even the difference of subject and object", which presents "the idea of God as a universal principle against subjective and objective religion alike", and which allows us to think of a God "who is within as He is without us" is ultimately to be conceived as unknowable. "The attempt to say anything definite of Him must involve the contradiction of excluding Him from other things, or other things from Him."[1]

The concepts of God as a complete objective abstraction, as

[1] *The Evolution of Religion* (Glasgow, 1899), vol. II, pp. 70-72.

an absolute Substance which underlies all particular forms of existence, and as an all-embracing yet abstract Infinite were all rejected, because they were 'pantheistic'. In their stead, Caird propounded a view of God as a synthetic 'principle of unity' comprehending and conserving everything finite with all its especial distinctiveness. For Caird, God was the Absolute, the personal integrated totality of all that is real, but Caird endeavored to think of Him as concrete rather than abstract. The extent to which he failed in doing this determines for us, from one standpoint, the degree to which his view is liable to the charge of pantheism. The extent to which he succeeded without at the same time providing adequately for a relative finite independence indicates the degree to which, from another viewpoint, he is liable to the same charge. It is possible, in fact, that a supposedly concrete 'principle of unity' may be a substantially abstract conception or else so deterministic in its implications that it provides for no reality but God. A concrete 'principle of unity', if such is an actual possibility, may be so thoroughly systematized, so rigidly determined in its nature, and its particulars so devoid of individual significance that it must be thought to represent a pantheistic viewpoint. In any case, we may well inquire whether Caird's philosophy, from either perspective, gives adequate place to finite individuals within the divine economy. First of all, let us consider whether there is any marked tendency toward abstraction in his thought.

Caird's very language, to begin with, is decidedly abstract. The phrase 'principle of unity', which is the key-phrase of his system, is most noticeably so. A 'principle' in itself contains the idea of a general law which has been abstracted from a series of particular facts and which leaves largely out of account all their differences. A 'principle of unity', in the second place, which Caird intends to signify that which is both concrete and universal, gives on the contrary, an additional abstractness to that implied by the term 'principle' as such. It is undoubtedly true, as Hegelians and Neo-Hegelians have always been ready to remind us, that there can be no unity without differences through which the unity runs. Nevertheless, a point of view may so emphasize the unity as to minimize the differences, and this is the actual tendency of Caird's most focal phrase.

Scarcely secondary in his usage, moreover, is the term 'self-consciousness'. This, it is pointed out, denotes the coherent form of all experience or, in Kantian phrase, the 'transcendental unity of apperception'. This usage, however, is arbitrary and unnatural. The term really suggests the consciousness of self as distinct from

other objects, and thus indicates an abstraction from the total consciousness of normal experience. If, nevertheless, we take the term in the sense which Caird intends, it is none the less abstract. It represents the hypostatizing of the form of experience as such and its separation from its own continuously concrete content.

This tendency toward abstraction is confirmed by other usages. The ideas of relation, system, and unity were Caird's most characteristic thoughts. These indeed imply the existence of actual objects, for there must be things to be related, systematized, and unified. Yet they may be a sort of necessary evil or, at any rate, quite incidental to the view. A few of Caird's statements will show that this tends to be the case in his philosophy. "All existence", he maintained, "is but the manifestation, and all knowledge but the apprehension, of relations."[2] "Reality lies—not . . . in the mere individual taken by itself, as common-sense supposes—nor, as science seems to teach, in the mere particular which is related to other particulars; it lies in the relation, or the principle of relation, itself, —in the universal which differentiates or particularises itself and yet is one with itself in its particularity."[3] "We cannot say a single rational word without expressing or implying a principle of unity which manifests itself in and through the difference of self and the world; and the utmost goal of all our knowledge, nay, we may say of our whole rational life, is to discover what is contained in that principle."[4] The "ultimate unity which is presupposed in all differences is the unity of thought with itself, the unity of self-consciousness, and . . . in this unity is contained the type of all science, and the form of all existence; in other words, that I=I is the formula of the universe."[5] Such statements unquestionably emphasize the primacy of relations and of unity, and such an emphasis means a slurring over distinctions, a magnifying of unity at the expense of the individual particulars which are organized into a system. It is quite true that reality seems to be an essentially systematic whole and that unless we conceive it as such we cannot understand how its parts hold together. It is also true that Caird endeavors to avoid the abstract extreme of Spinoza's philosophy and of the Upanishads of India. Yet it is equally certain that his own system tends to be a metaphysical monism in which finite existence is secondary to the thoughts of divine absoluteness and

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[2] *Hegel* (Edinburgh and Philadelphia, n. d.), pp. 160-161.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

[4] *The Evolution of Religion,* vol. I, p. 165.

[5] *Essays on Literature and Philosophy* (Glasgow, 1892), vol. II, pp. 517-518.

universal unity. This, indeed, seems to indicate a definitely pantheistic tendency.

That this tendency is not a mere matter of language or of misinterpreted emphasis is rendered undeniable by two conceptions by means of which Caird elaborated his viewpoint. The first is a conception of reality as organic. For him the universe was an *organic* whole and partook throughout of that remarkable integration which distinguishes an organism. Such a view leaves little room for belief in the distinctiveness or relative independence of the 'parts' of reality, for every organism we know is an interpenetrating and self-acting whole. Its parts are woven into a single fabric of being, and the actions of the parts are activities of this being. An organic view of reality, in fact, is necessarily pantheistic. It vests all determinations in the ultimate Being in which all parts are integrated and as the expression of which they always act. Of Caird's particular idea of the organic nature of the real this is still more decidedly true. It leaves still less room for finite distinctiveness and relative finite freedom. "By the organic unity of the world," he stated, ". . . it is not meant merely that the world as a whole is to be interpreted on the *analogy* of the living body, or of a plant or animal. Such an organism only imperfectly realises the idea of which we are speaking; and if the world were organic in this fashion, it would not be a self-determined whole, in which all differences were brought back into unity." "The supreme difference of subject and object is wanting to, or imperfectly expressed in, its life, and therefore there is not in it the possibility of the supreme reconciliation of intelligence with itself."[6] The unity of the world, accordingly, is to be conceived in terms of the unity of self-consciousness, and this is a higher type of unity than that of the ordinary organism. Such a view is, therefore, strongly and abstractly pantheistic.

Let us consider, however, Caird's other conception, that of *self-consciousness* itself. It is in the light of this conception that he defines an organism, and in this fashion he expounds his idea of the 'principle of unity'. Self-consciousness, we have noted, is an essentially abstract idea, but we must consider Caird's specific usage of the term more fully. In this connection, Caird makes Kant's philosophy his starting point, but his pre-suppositions are those of Hegel and to the latter he is wholly loyal. Kant's definition of existence in terms of 'position' he interprets in Hegelian fashion to mean that existence is always existence *for a self*[7] and that,

[6] *Hegel,* p. 181.

[7] *The Critical Philosophy of Kant* (Glasgow, 1889), vol. I, p. 122.

therefore, there is nothing real apart from the productions and enclosures of conscious experience. In fact, to concede "that all existence is existence *for* a self is to adopt a principle, the natural outcome or complement of which is the doctrine that all existence is the manifestation of a self."[8] This, in turn, leads us to conceive reality as the all-inclusive experience of a divine Absolute. The self for which all reality is the conscious experience cannot be a "finite self, because we find it impossible to reduce the object to a mere phase in the life of the subject." But recognising both "as indivisible . . . yet necessarily opposed, as incapable of identification yet necessarily related, we are forced to seek the secret of their being in a higher principle, of whose unity they in their action and reaction are the manifestation, which they presuppose as their beginning and to which they point as their end. . . . To put it more directly, the idea of an absolute unity, which transcends all oppositions of finitude, and especially the last opposition which includes all others—the opposition of subject and object—*is the ultimate presupposition of our consciousness.* Hence, we cannot understand the real character of our rational life or appreciate the full compass of its movement, unless we recognise as its necessary constituents or guiding ideas, not only the ideas of object and subject, but also the idea of God. The idea of God, therefore—meaning by that, in the first instance, only the idea of an absolute principle of unity which binds in one 'all thinking things, all objects of all thought', which is at once the source of being to all things that are, and of knowing to all beings that know—is an essential principle, or rather the ultimate essential principle of our intelligence, a principle which must manifest itself in the life of every rational creature".[9]

This positing of an absolute Self-consciousness of which all existence is the manifestation is certainly more than a tacit confession that reality is fundamentally and abstractly One. To be sure, Caird contends that "the pure intelligence which is the *prius* of all things, must not . . . be regarded—as Aristotle regarded it—as merely theoretical, but also as practical. It must be conceived as a living principle, a principle which only in self-manifestation can be conscious of itself, and to the very nature of which, therefore, self-manifestation is essential."[10] Nevertheless, each concrete expression of the absolute Intelligence is but a part or an

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[9] *The Evolution of Religion,* vol. I, pp. 67-68.

[10] *Essays on Literature and Philosophy,* vol. II, pp. 520-521.

activity of the Absolute and nothing whatever in itself. There is but one reality, and that reality is an absolute Mind.

At this point, in fact, Caird made a most disastrous leap, so far as finite individuality is concerned. His concept of a cosmic Self-consciousness is wholly at variance with the idea of separate finite consciousness. For if finite consciousness is just part of an all-inclusive consciousness, how can it have that distinctiveness which it seems to possess? Conscious intelligence, most certainly, may involve different organizations of factors in all of its parts, and that fact may seem to give to finite minds an especial importance and dignity. These minds, though, are but parts or manifestations of the Absolute. It is the absolute Mind which ramifies in these divergent ways. The Absolute is *Universal Intelligence.* There is no intelligence which is not part of that Intelligence. Finite minds are neither separate nor self-determining. Does this not imply a view of reality as an intellectual Substance quite comparable to the abstract Substance posited by Spinoza? For "reality", we must remember, "lies,—not . . . in the mere individual taken by itself" but in the "principle of relation, itself,—in the universal which differentiates or particularises itself and yet is one with itself in its particularity."[11]

It seems evident, indeed, that Caird has given to rationality a pre-eminence which reduces everything to a single self-manifesting thought principle. Everything that exists exists for and as an expression of intelligence. Matter has no permanence "in its own right, but as the necessary attribute of the object of consciousness as such."[12] The world is the manifestation of intelligence, and the key to nature is the key of mind. Nothing can be conceived, in fact, which is not the self-manifestation of thought. Thought must have opposites and differences from which to move, but the structure of reality is itself the product of rational thought. Mind which furnishes the key to reality and which provides the synthesis by which everything is brought into an inclusive relation, appears twice in its own synthesis. It "appears once as one of the opposites, and again as the unity which transcends the opposition."[13] Is not reality reduced to an intellectual substance in which certain things inhere as landmarks of universal thought? God, it is true, is more than thought. Like the finite consciousness he finds an object in opposition to Himself, but that object exists as the neces-

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11 *Hegel,* p. 176.

12 *The Critical Philosophy of Kant,* vol. I, p. 553.

13 *Essays on Literature and Philosophy,* vol. II, p. 524.

sary condition of divine thought and as encompassed by it. It is an element in, and an attribute of, the all-comprehending Intelligence. Surely we are reduced to a subjectivism of the Absolute and the universe is substantially definable in terms of self-conscious rationality. Strictly, there seems to be little variety in the divine experience, for even God's self-determinations are but the expressions of thoughts which are forever leaping from thing to thing, from object to self, and encircling all in a continuous synthesis. The universe is simply 'such stuff as thoughts are made of', and which they presuppose, interpreted in the light of the psychological synthetic process. On this basis, therefore, there appears to be no opportunity for a just recognition of finite selfhood. Everything is submerged within universal rationality. The hypothesis that the unity of the universe is the unity of self-differentiating intelligence commits Caird to a monism in which the finite consciousness must lose all distinctive reality. The self-manifestations of thought cannot be essentially different from the self-manifestations of substance. And if the philosophy of a universal substance must be entitled 'pantheism' because it submerges all individuality, the metaphysics of universal thought deserves the same label. The fact that thought is somewhat characteristically self-conscious, and thus suggestive of personality, is no outlet from this conclusion. For an absolute Self-consciousness which engulfs all finite selves destroys the very type of distinction it was intended to preserve. It becomes an abstract, rather than a concrete, universal. And this tendency toward abstraction seems even more marked when we recall that 'self-consciousness' is but the form, and not the content, of all consciousness.

If, however, there is any uncertainty that Caird's philosophy tends to be a type of abstract pantheism there can be no doubt that so far as his thought is concrete it is a form of concrete pantheism. Reality is throughout the self-expression of the Absolute. God, as the principle of self-conscious unity, is also the principle of *self-determination* in the universe. Such a principle in a most highly integrated system leaves no room for self-determination by the parts of the system. It may indeed be true that this principle does not operate "like a law imposed upon a foreign matter, for its only matter is itself."[14] Yet finite beings could not on this basis be considered in any degree self-determining except in so far as they are identified with the Absolute. In that case, they would cease to be finite, and reality would consist of millions of Absolutes, a wholly illogical conception. As Caird himself states the matter, "in determining," the

[14] *Hegel,* p. 179.

Absolute "determines *itself;* in producing differences, it produces *itself in them.*"[15] The Absolute is all-embracing, and there is nothing which is not part of itself and its direct self-expression. If, therefore, we could overlook the marked tendency toward an abstract monism in Caird's philosophy, we should still be left with a completely deterministic though concrete instance of pantheism.

Now it must be admitted that Caird did not recognize this predominantly pantheistic trend in his thought. He considered, in fact, that the idea of a *concrete universal* provided against the logical submergence of finite individuality. Whether it is possible for such a conception to do justice to individuality is not our concern at this point. What we must contend is that Caird's particular statement of this idea was too rigidly monistic to allow for the reality of finite selves. He did, to be sure, make an especial effort to protect the genuine existence of finite beings within the system of universal intelligence by positing the idea that *the whole is in each of its parts.* Yet this idea simply leads to a paradox of finite selfhood whereby the finite individual is implicitly absolute, and thus there is an inconceivable plurality of Absolutes, or else the finite being is just a peculiar concentration of the Absolute as such and nothing in itself. The monistic emphasis of Caird is not at all consonant with the first alternative, and the second is inevitably pantheistic. Let us, nevertheless, consider this idea in greater detail.

What then did Caird mean by the idea that the whole is in every part? It was "the idea of the world as an organic system whose centre lies in a self-conscious intelligence" and which "reveals in every existence a centre of self-individualising energy."[16] A "world in which the central principle is a self-determining Being, while, in one aspect of it, it seems to be a unity in which no room is left for difference, in another aspect of it breaks into an infinite number of fragments each of which seems to be centered in itself . . . it is a universe in which 'every thought is truth, and every particle of dust an organization;' a macrocosm made up of microcosms, which is all in every part."[17]

How can all be in each of its parts and yet be the whole of which they are the parts? Caird claimed that it was as microcosms within a macrocosm that this could be the case. It is conceivable that one organism may exist within another, as in the instance of the microscopic germ which subsists within a living body. This mi-

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[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 194-195.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

crocosm, however, is not part of the larger organism which it inhabits, though it might contribute to the processes of the latter. And, while it may imbibe from the body in which it dwells, the whole certainly cannot be said to be in the microscopic germ. It is a case of Jonah in the belly of the whale, a situation which is incapable of inversion while at the same time retaining its original character. The example of an offspring in the body of its mother is not fundamentally different. The unborn being undeniably partakes of his mother's nature, but only partially so. The mother does not actually indwell her young. Nor is the latter integral to its parent. A macrocosm made up of microcosms, accordingly, is an inconceivability. It cannot be an integrated totality and functional unity such as Caird posits in his hyper-organic view of the universe, and hence, this explanatory figure appears out of harmony with the central emphasis of his thought. We can see, to be sure, that an organism is substantially and actively present in all of its parts, but these latter are not *microcosms* in the strict sense of that term. And were they such, they would not be semi-independent realities such as finite selves are regarded. We are compelled, therefore, to try to think of this idea, that the whole is in its parts, in other terms.

According to Caird, self-consciousness is the true organic type. The ordinary organism is only partly organic. This, most certainly, is taking extensive liberty with terminology, but in self-consciousness he recognized a much greater integration than in a living body. The former, therefore, he thought to represent a higher organic category than the latter. In self-consciousness, the world stands over against the subject and is the necessary condition for the subject's recognition of itself. The world, also, is a spatial-temporal *unity*. Objective existence is thus an integrated whole, and it is also organic to the self whose experience of it is necessary to his experience of himself. Thus self-consciousness represents the highest conceivable integration of existence. The finite consciousness embraces significant wholes of selfhood and the world. The absolute Consciousness embraces all reality, including all finite selves and their worlds. The former are microcosms, the latter, a macrocosm. The former exist within the latter, and the latter is individualized in the former. This, indeed, appears intelligible but, nevertheless, it is logically incongruous, and for two sets of reasons which we shall consider.

The first relates to the fact, already presented, that to think of the Absolute as present in finite self-consciousness is to think of finite beings as actually or implicitly absolute, in which case they are not really finite and there is more than one Absolute. If, on

the other hand, we are to think in terms of a single Absolute the self-individualizations of that Absolute must be mere phases in its experience or else unreal manifestations. They cannot be relatively free and distinctively real beings.

McTaggart presented this paradox excellently when he stated that "it is necessary that in some way or another the whole of the unity shall be in each individual. . . . Yet . . . to suppose that the unity exists in the individuals *as isolated* is to destroy the unity. The unity must be completely in each individual. Yet it must also be the bond which unites them. How is this to be?"[18] McTaggart resolved this paradox for himself by recourse to the Hegelian category of cognition, of which consciousness is the pre-eminent phase. He maintained that "if we take all reality, for the sake of convenience, as limited to three individuals, A, B, and C, and suppose them to be conscious, then the whole will be reproduced in each of them. A, for example, will, as conscious, be aware of himself, of B, and of C, and of the unity which joins them in a system. And thus the unity is within each individual". "At the same time the unity is not in the individuals as isolated. For the whole point of saying that the unity is for A, is that it exists both out of him and in him."[19] It is hard to see, however, how finite selves even from this standpoint could contain the whole in the sense that the Absolute does. McTaggart, indeed, admitted that the parts do not contain the whole "in the same way that the whole contains itself,"[20] and he also recognized that such incipiently absolute selves as he posited could not be parts of a more comprehending and integrating personal Absolute. McTaggart's solution, therefore, simply shows how utterly inconceivable it is that finite consciousness can exist as part of an absolute Consciousness and yet be a separate consciousness. Either we must think of finite consciousness being engulfed by the Absolute, giving us an abstract form of pantheism, or we must conceive of a multiplicity of Absolutes, a most ridiculous conception and absolutely out of harmony with Caird's Hegelian monism.

The second set of reasons for the logical incongruity of Caird's thought concerns the fact that if the whole is in every part it must be in a grain of sand and a particle of dust, as well as in the total consciousness of a finite self. The idea has indeed been made familiar by Tennyson that if one really knew a tiny flower

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18 McTaggart, J. M. E., *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (Cambridge, 1901), p. 13.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

he would know both man and God. The reason for this is the much emphasized Hegelian idea that nothing can be understood apart from its relations, and that the flower or the particle of dust can only be really known in relation to man, God, and all reality. From this standpoint, it is the *idea* of the whole, rather than the whole itself, which is in every part. The grain of sand is an object for a self. As such it manifests itself in relation to other phenomena with which it helps to constitute an objective situation. In this fashion it implicitly points to these other phenomena and the complete situation. Likewise, it has, by its very nature as object, a direct reference to the subject for which it exists and also to the unity which embraces both the subject and the whole content of objective phenomena. Thus it may be regarded as pointing to, and reflecting the entire totality of which it is a part. It contains the *idea* of the whole within itself. If, then, we think of the finite self in this same manner, it is but the idea of the whole which *it* continually endeavors to articulate. Like the grain of sand, it is forever pointing to the Absolute and appearing to be something in itself because it reflects the Absolute, but, like a mere symbol or sign, it is lost in that which it eternally manifests.

It may seem that the self-conscious individual, as the true organic type must constitute a 'unique' expression of reality. But if we take the finite self as the standard and think of that self as a unity *par excellence,* then we must either have no place for Caird's thoroughly integrated Absolute or the standard must be separated from the self in which it is found and identified with an all-inclusive reality, of which the self after all is but a feeble and unreal type. In the latter circumstance, it is but an aspect of the absolute Consciousness, and finite individuality is merely a reflection of the one real Individual. We cannot maintain that the whole is really in every part and that every finite consciousness is a distinctive organism without dissociating the Absolute into innumerable self-conscious centers. For either the Absolute, as the self-conscious and self-determining totality of being, includes all consciousness and all determinations within Himself, in which case there is no real finite consciousness, or there is no self-consciousness which is ultimately absolute. The alternative which the main trends of Caird's philosophy really represent is that in which the finite individual is submerged. Obviously he does try to do more justice to the individual, but actually all finite existence succumbs before his idea of the Absolute.

Caird's view is thus unquestionably pantheistic, and in an abstract sense. For, if the finite individual is lost in the Absolute,

the deity becomes the subject of a meaningless object. The Absolute sinks into a self-identity, in that its object is a mere shadow of itself. If it transcends the object its transcendence is but the transcendence of itself. It has its attributes and modes, but they are the mere self-expressions of the Absolute and nothing in themselves. There is but one genuine reality, and that reality is God. If, on the other hand, we take into account the concrete trends in Caird's thought, we must still admit that it cannot escape between the Scylla and Charybdis of abstract and concrete pantheism.

III

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A. S. PRINGLE-PATTISON

Our conclusions regarding Caird's philosophy are endorsed by Pringle-Pattison whose philosophical system we are now to appraise from the same standpoint. "A principle of unity," he says,"—the phrase which appears so often in Caird for example—is in the end as bald and abstract a description of God or the Absolute as the much-derided 'Being' or 'Substance' of earlier philosophies."[21] Pringle-Pattison indeed disposes of the Hegelian and Neo-Hegelian philosophies one after another in similar fashion. The outcome of Hegel's own effort, he concludes, was to produce an "Absolute Ego" which is "a pure abstraction",[22] and all of the more orthodox Hegelians arrive at this same impasse. Neo-Hegelians like Francis H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet are in no better straits. They talk of the 'blending' of the individual within the Absolute. Bradley, in fact, "speaks of the perfection and harmony which the individual attains in the Absolute as 'the complete gift and dissipation of his personality' in which 'he, as such, must vanish'. . . . 'Transmuted' is the word most favored by both" Bradley and Bosanquet, "but synonyms plentifully scattered" throughout Bradley's writings "are 'merged', 'blended', 'fused', 'absorbed', 'run together', 'transformed' . . . 'suppressed', 'destroyed', and 'lost'."[23] "Professor Bosanquet is not so copious in his metaphors or so peremptory in his way of putting the case, but his view of the final destiny and last truth of things . . . is, in all essentials, the same. He also tells us that the content of the imperfect individual has to be 'transmuted and rearranged,' the result

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21 *The Idea of God* (New York, 1917), p. 334.

22 Seth, Andrew, *Hegelianism and Personality* (Edinburgh and London, 1887), p. 227.

23 *The Idea of God,* p. 281.

being 'the contribution of some modifying elements to the experiences which come together in the Absolute,' and as Mr. Bradley talks of the finite self as being 'embraced and harmonized' in the Absolute, through its being 'suppressed as such', so Professor Bosanquet speaks of 'the expansion and absorption of the self.' "[24]

Pringle-Pattison would pronounce all of the foregoing formulations of absolutism fundamentally pantheistic. They present a view of reality in which all that is finite is lost in deity. He himself comes, on the other hand, as the exponent of a genuinely new Hegelianism. All that have gone before, while not intentionally thieves and robbers, have nevertheless deprived Hegelianism of its real gospel. Pringle-Pattison comes to present the spirit of this philosophy apart from its historic forms. His view is subject to development and some degree of vacillation. Yet, throughout, he believes that there is a good essence in Hegelian thought, and that he retains as fundamental for his own philosophy. In essence he is, like other Hegelians, an absolute idealist. For him the whole "universe is to be thought of, in the last resort, as an Experience . . . an experience not limited to the intermittent and fragmentary glimpses of this and the other finite consciousness, but resuming the whole life of the world in a fashion which is necessarily incomprehensible save by the Absolute itself."[25] Is now Pringle-Pattison's variant of Neo-Hegelianism also pantheistic?

We must, first of all, distinguish two foci in his thought. The primary of these is the doctrine that the finite individual is *real, free,* and uniquely *significant.* Secondarily, there is his *absolutism.* This latter is maintained with somewhat less insistence than the first fundamental tenet, but it is none the less integral to his philosophy. Does this second focus of his thinking logically allow for the primary one? That is the central question for this part of our study, for it is only from the standpoint of his absolutism that he is at all liable to the charge of pantheism.

There can be no question that Pringle-Pattison believes in and insists upon the significant reality of finite beings. He rightly urges that the reality of the finite self is the only ground from which we can start our philosophizing. "We must take up our stand . . . *within* the self, and our philosophy must be able to account for, or at least to find room for, this mode of existence and the measure of freedom and independence which it involves. . . . The authorship of our own acts and our responsibility for them—

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[24] *Ibid.,* pp. 280-281.

[25] *Ibid.,* p. 390.

this is the inmost meaning of our freedom and independence, and any theory is self-condemned which can find no room for this elementary certainty."[26] Pringle-Pattison emphatically asserts that the existence of the finite individual "is a fact as true and important 'from the side of the Absolute' as from the point of view of the finite beings themselves".[27]

Pringle-Pattison finds a place for the finite self in the scheme of actuality by means of the Aristotelian conception of substance as an invariably concrete individuation of reality. Bosanquet had conceived substance in the Spinozan sense, as the underlying substratum of existence upon which all being depends. "A thing", he said, ". . . as an existence can have no claim to be an ultimate subject. It is, as such, a provisional subject, and has, of course, a being and reality, and is necessary to the universe. But it is selected for convenience of special knowledge or practice, and justifies its selection in indefinitely varied degrees."[28] In opposition to this view, which makes a finite individual merely 'apparent', 'superficial', and 'provisional', a mere 'adjective' of the whole, Pringle-Pattison posits the conception of substance, in the Aristotelian sense, as a "distinguishable existence or concrete thinghood." "The existence of a world at all," he states, "just means individuation. Every existent is a 'this', a 'one', a being in the strict sense unique, even although, in the case of inorganic objects, one may readily admit that the bounds of what we treat as an individual depend largely on our immediate interest or practical purpose. According to that interest or purpose, any part of a spatial or temporal whole, may become, in its turn, a whole, but the point is that every part so attended to exhibits the same characteristic of concrete thisness. The relation of whole and part has, in short, nothing to do with the relation of substance and accident; and the much misunderstood idea of substance, as applied to every existent thing, and to any of the parts into which an existent thing may be subdivided, is at bottom simply an attempt to express the characteristic structure exhibited by concrete reality at any point, of being a 'this' as well as a 'what', a being possessing qualities and not a mere conflux of universals or, in other words, a highly complex adjective. The uniqueness which comes from the occupation of different parts of space or moments of time is, of course, the lowest or most imperfect form in which individuation manifests itself, and a merely

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[26] Carr, H. W., *Life and Finite Individuality,* a Symposium (London, 1918), p. 114.

[27] *The Idea of God,* p. 277.

[28] Carr, *Life and Finite Individuality,* p. 79.

inorganic view of the physical world may well be an abstract way of looking at the facts. In any case, the physical world as a whole must be interpreted in the end as organic to the world of life and consciousness. It is in living and sentient beings that we first meet the real individual, for in these the unity and centrality are in no wise imposed on the facts by our way of regarding them. They are objective in the sense that they express the essential mode of the creature's existence. The organism in commerce with its environment as a responsive centre of feeling and action, and in all its activities a self-maintaining whole, thus becomes for us the clearest type of the process of rounding to a separate mind, in which, at a higher level, the creation of the self-conscious individual consists. The higher we go, the more clearly does individuation impress itself upon us as the very method of creation, or, to speak less theologically, as the central and most characteristic feature of the cosmic evolution. If, then, we follow out this indication, so far from being a vanishing and relatively unreal incident of the process, the finite spiritual individual, with all his potentialities, tends rather to appear . . . as the only conceivable goal of the divine endeavour."[29] Thus the self has its unmistakable place in the scheme of actuality. The universe comes to its most significant focus in finite selves. It has its other foci, but its most complete self-manifestation is in free and moral personalities. Reality is a dynamic whole, and at the pinnacle of the cosmic achievement are the personalities of men. From this standpoint, therefore, there seems to be no uncertainty regarding the significant reality of finite selves.

There is, however, as we have already noted, a second focal tenet to Pringle-Pattison's philosophy, the reality of a personal Absolute, an all-comprehending Experience. Nor is this phase of his philosophy any quasi-absolutism. He emphatically rejects the pluralistic absolutism of McTaggart and the more monistic views of Howison and Rashdall.[30] He insists that finite facts are "unable to stand alone", that they are "riddled with discord and contradiction", and therefore "that the mind seeks to pass beyond them as fragmentary appearances to a reality which it conceives as an abiding and harmonious whole."[31] This harmonious whole of reality is a Self,[32] a focalized and closed unity of the same essential nature as the finite self,[33] but it is not to be regarded as separate from

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 105-108.
[30] *The Idea of God*, pp. 391-393.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 250-251.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 271 by implication.
[33] *The Idea of Immortality* (Oxford, 1922), p. 102.

finite selves. The Absolute is not just "one individual mind among a number of equally self-subsistent individuals".[34] It is "the containing life", "the sustaining and containing Life of all the worlds", "the ultimate Experience upon which we depend", "the universal life in which finite individuals share", "the nature of the whole upon which they draw",[35] the "experience in which the universe is felt and apprehended as an ultimately harmonious whole",[36] "an Experience . . . resuming the whole of life of the world".[37] How now can the Absolute have this integral relation to all reality without itself being the whole which includes every concrete entity, thing or being, as part of itself? The foregoing phrases seem quite definitely to suggest that Pringle-Pattison regards the Absolute as an all-inclusive Self, and indeed as the integrated totality of all that is real. From this viewpoint, therefore, one is disposed to wonder whether his philosophical provision for finite individuality is not merely a verbal postulate. How, in fact, could the *Absolute* be a harmonious whole of Experience and not engulf finite beings?

Pringle-Pattison contends, however, that finite experiences "do not form part of the divine experience in the same sense in which they are the experiences of the selves in question." He states that "no mental experience of mine can, in the sense in which it is my experience, form part of the experience of any other mind. Uniqueness belongs to the very notion of a self or consciousness. That being so, it follows . . . that, as Dean Rashdall contends, it is meaningless to speak of one consciousness as 'included in another', or to speak of 'a Mind which includes all minds', and of man as, in that sense, 'a part of God'." There is indeed "a comprehensive divine experience", but it is "other than, and infinitely more than, that of any finite self or of all finite selves collectively".[38] The Absolute, in fact, is unable to "experience anything as novel or to feel any loss",[39] experiences which are most real to finite selves. It must, therefore, be a very different self.

This contention, nevertheless, is at variance with the important trend of Pringle-Pattison's thought, presented above, in which he endeavors to show that the Absolute is not a separate mind but an integral Life and a comprehensive Experience. He asserts,

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[34] *The Idea of God,* p. 320.
[35] *Ibid.,* p. 435.
[36] *Ibid.,* p. 314.
[37] *Ibid.,* p. 390.
[38] *Ibid.,* pp. 433-434.
[39] *Ibid.,* p. 364.

indeed, that "it is everywhere the mark of the higher and wider experience to comprehend the lower and narrower", just as "the human intelligence can appreciate the dumb strivings of the animal mind, or a parent can sympathize with the ephemeral joys and unreasoning sorrows of his child".[40] He believes that somehow the Absolute must embrace all the experiences of finitude. His analogy, to be sure, does not mean all that he seems to read into it. It means merely that human beings are sympathetically, and sometimes empathetically, capable of similar experiences. It does not mean that they ever have, or participate in an 'identical' experience. Otherwise they would not be distinct individuals. In fact, there does not appear to be the slightest possibility of one individual including another's experience as such, and this seems to be particularly true with respect to the Absolute. For the Absolute to have experiences of subjective finitude, ignorance, and error, experiences which are commonplace in human life, is inconceivable. For the Absolute to participate directly in the conflicting experiences of finite beings, without resolving those experiences into a harmony in which their reality as separate experiences is lost, is incomprehensible. Yet unless the Absolute can experience at once the distinctiveness of each finite existence and all the experiences that go therewith, just as they are experienced by the finite individual, and, at the same time, apprehend those experiences as a real unity, the Absolute cannot be a unified *whole* of Experience. Yet there is this very suggestion in this phase of Pringle-Pattison's philosophy. His conception of the Absolute, as an all-comprehending Self, has an unmistakable pantheistic tinge. It logically involves the absorbing of finite experience and thereby of finite selves.

Pringle-Pattison, does not mean for his 'Absolute' to be thought of in the strictly inclusive sense. He has, in fact, made definite efforts to avoid that conception of deity. He has even stated, under criticism, that God and the Absolute are not strictly identical. He confesses, however, that he has used the terms interchangeably and he contends that such usage is practically defensible. God and the Absolute, he maintains, are really inseparable from each other. Other terms, in fact, are inadequate to describe either. God is essentially the Absolute and the Absolute is substantially divine. To use the term 'universe' instead of 'the Absolute', as Dean Rashdall has done, is to present a devitalized conception of reality. To think of God and finite spirits as somehow separate within the totality of existence is to sacrifice the necessary

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 365.

conception of divine immanence. " 'Universe' is, moreover, too cold and threadbare a term to serve as the ultimate designation of the living Fact we seek to name. . . . It lacks almost entirely the suggestion of a self-contained and internally organized whole, beyond which there is nothing. The latter is the true philosophical meaning of the Absolute, and it is well to have a term to express just this meaning. For any idealist or spiritual view, reality is a systematic whole of this description . . . God exists only as a self-communicating Life: in theological language, creation is an eternal act or process—a process which must be ultimately understood not as the making of something out of nothing but as a self-revelation of the divine in and to finite spirits. . . . This, then, is the true Absolute, a term which would be inapplicable to the transcendent God of an abstract monotheism, but which is not unfitly applied to the sweep of a Life which realises itself in and through the process of the finite world, as consummated in the divine sonship of man. It is always, I think, of God as thus organic to the world that the term 'the Absolute' is used in my volume."[41]

This attempt, however, to distinguish between God and total reality is, to say the least, rather unsuccessful. The difference between the two is presented as *aspectal* rather than individuating. God is conceived as organically inseparable from all that exists, and all existence is, therefore, considered part of Him. This fact confirms our opinion that genuine absolutism is an essential phase of Pringle-Pattison's thought, and shows that while he recognizes its dangerous implications for finite individuality he cannot bring himself to forego this absolutism. He puts himself in the inconsistent position of one who, for one set of purposes, denies the absoluteness of deity and, for another, affirms the very sort of absoluteness which he has already denied. The preceding paragraph, nevertheless, represents a refinement of his view in terms of organic psychological vitalism. Does this restatement avoid the stigmata of pantheism?

According to the restatement, God is a life *organic to all existence* but not completely inclusive. Man is not strictly part of God, but God is in a sense part of man. "He is the higher self within the self which inwardly illuminates all our lives."[42] Pringle-Pattison's view of reality is primarily organic, though he seldom seems to have made an explicit avowal of this. Is his organic conception of God's relation to the rest of existence non-pantheistic? A study of our author's ideas of what constitutes an organism

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41 *Ibid.,* pp. 431-433.

42 Seth, A., *Two Lectures on Theism* (Edinburgh and London, 1897), p. 28.

shows, in fact, that it is not. An organic theory of reality, we have had clear occasion to note, is an unmitigated pantheism. It posits all existence as a single integrated living whole. Pringle-Pattison's system is no exception to this rule.

His view of an organism is substantially like that of Edward Caird. "In the first place," he writes, "an organism, although its parts are outside of one another in space, is a unity or whole in a sense in which that cannot be asserted of any inorganic thing. It seems actively to constitute itself a separate whole. It is a natural unity, *unum per se,* in Leibniz' phrase, as against the *unum per accidens* of inorganic things, which is a unity more or less arbitrarily carved out of nature's continuum according to human interests and purposes. An organism asserts itself against its environment as such a natural unity: it *acts* as a whole. Its actions are selective in the interest of the whole, self-preservative, self-recuperative. The fundamental assumption of biology is that of a creature thus maintaining and reproducing its structure and activities as a whole, in the face of varying environment."[43]

In the second place, "if we start thus with an adequate conception of the organism", as a unity and an ultimate fact, "we shall be on the way to a better understanding of the kind of unity which can really belong to a soul or self".[44] In other words, we shall grasp more adequately 'the unity of consciousness'. For "although the parts of an organism, if we regard it physically, are actually external to one another, it is the very nature of an organism, if regarded functionally (that is to say, *as* an organism), to transcend this mutual exclusiveness. The parts of an organism are so much members one of another and of the whole which they constitute—they are so interpenetrative in their action—that it is hardly a paradox to say that the organism *qua* organism is not in space at all. Part and whole acquire here a meaning unknown to physics, a meaning in which the necessary correlation of the terms is for the first time apparent. The organism, as we have already seen, is the first real whole, the first natural unity. It exhibits a unity in multiplicity far more impressive and far more important than the punctual unity of the hypothetical atom. And it has often been pointed out that in this unity and mutual implication of whole and parts we have the best analogue of the *kind* of unity which we expect to find, still more intimately realized, in the self-conscious being."[45]

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[43] *The Idea of Immortality,* p. 89.

[44] *Ibid.,* p. 92.

[45] *Ibid.,* p. 93.

If, now, God is organic to the world in the sense just elaborated (and how else could Pringle-Pattison think of the organic relations of deity?) then God, the world, and man are an integrated whole in which while the parts may be external to each other they are functionally one. This conception may indeed avoid the danger of abstract pantheism but it does not escape a deterministic absolutism which is just as pantheistic. The functional unity of reality, as implied by the organic theory, leaves no place for even a kind of semi-freedom on the part of finite beings. Deity, according to Pringle-Pattison's revised statement, is only approximately absolute, but deity is more absolute in Pringle-Pattison's view than he fully recognizes. Deity is the all-embracing and controlling unity of reality.

This conclusion is reinforced, moreover, by the inadequacy of Pringle-Pattison's theory of human freedom. Freedom appears as an arbitrary postulate which he does not really show to be theoretically tenable. He thinks of all action as purposive in the broad sense that it fits into a universal purpose. Finite behavior "is directed more or less clearly" by the individual toward some end,[46] but it is due ultimately to *feelings* from within. "A living being," says Pringle-Pattison, "is, at the very least, a centre of sensation and reaction; and when sensation is so used, it means not only intellectual awareness of some presence, but also a subjective drawing to, or away from, the intruder. This second element of feeling proper is the condition in virtue of which the sensation as knowledge calls forth the reaction as will. The appetitive is the first phase of consciousness. And however the growth of the intellectual life and of volitional self-control may emancipate us from the promptings of the moment, it is to the end through feeling that the whole process of our life goes on. It is in feeling that we assert our individuality, give expression to our preferences and distastes. Feeling leads each of us to select from the infinite of the knowable and doable, that little world of interests and habits which differentiates us one from another, and gives to each his peculiar point of outlook upon the universe."[47] On such a basis, therefore, it is most uncertain that a human self possesses any freedom. The individual's sense of purpose may be entirely the accompaniment of his emotional drives and devoid of any ultimate determining power. Or it may itself be produced by the operations of the universe upon the self, and his response, accordingly, would be essentially an

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[46] *Man's Place in the Cosmos,* second edition (Edinburgh and London, 1902), p. 91.

[47] *Ibid.,* p. 79.

automatic response to universal forces. He reacts to his environment and to the factors of existence according as he is stirred inwardly. The intellect may make its contribution to the determining feelings of the individual but that contribution may really be the product of other forces in the causal chain. Feeling is the cause of action and feeling is due to the influence of the universe upon a specific type of organism, a type of organism which the universe has itself produced. Even reflective thought must follow the path of the specific individuality to which the totality of things has given rise, for ultimately the finite being is but a differentiation of the Absolute. "Differentiation", in fact, ". . . constitutes the very essence and open secret of the Absolute Life."[48]

The outcome of our investigation is thus to show that there are trends in Pringle-Pattison's thought which must be regarded as one or the other of two types of pantheism. We do not mean that Pringle-Pattison is a pantheist. To call him such would be most unfair. Throughout his writings he insists on the significant reality of finite beings and this is his primary emphasis. What we do maintain is that there are absolutist tendencies in his thought which do not harmonize with his conception of the finite self, and that these tendencies are unmistakably pantheistic.

Just how well Pringle-Pattison's absolutism lends itself to interpretation in terms of either form of pantheism is shown most strikingly in his concept of time. Time, he contends, must be conceived teleologically. Its stages are not to be taken as successive, but "as elements or members of a completed purpose."[49] These members are apprehended synoptically within the Absolute. They are experienced as parts of an ever present whole within which there is not even a distinction of beginning and end. "The whole is felt in every part, and every part is real as an element in the whole."[50]

"Hence it is . . . that the analogy of a work of art—a great drama or a story—often seems to bring us nearest to what we feel must be the truth. For here, too, there is no such thing as a detached event, a mere present. In a great tragedy everything that happens is organic to the whole; the action which passes on the stage at any moment depends for its significance on all that has gone before, and we forefeel in it the future issues which are being decided. When we read or witness a play for the first time, and

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48 *The Idea of God*, p. 277.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 358.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 361.

the course of the action is unknown to us, this sense of the solidarity of the whole, the prescience of an immanent destiny working itself out in the individual scenes—in a word or a glance—naturally grows as we proceed, and reaches its maximum of intensity as we approach the close. The infinite pathos of *Othello* is all uttered in the parting cry, 'No way but this'. But in the case of Greek tragedy, where the legendary basis was familiar to the spectators, or in the case of any modern masterpiece where the end and the outline of the plot are known to us beforehand, this perception of the meaning of the whole as articulated in the individual incidents is present to the reader or spectator of the piece from the very outset. And the same thing is true when we hear the opening chords of a well-known symphony; we hear them not as single chords but as elements in a great musical structure, prophetic, as it were, of all the thought and emotion that is to follow. The former case, where the End is gradually disclosed to us—divined by us—as we proceed, represents our human, finite attitude towards the future; the second, which may be supposed to reproduce that of the original poet or composer, is perhaps the nearest analogue we have to the divine apprehension of the temporal."[51] "Time (and space) are to be regarded, in short, as the *principia individuationis,* the forms of finite individuation, but as somehow transcended in the ultimate Experience on which we depend."[52]

This statement is indeed an admission that the finite experience of time is not ultimately real, whereas the idea of the Absolute Experience as a 'completed' whole makes it impossible to conceive of human freedom. Did finite freedom really exist the Absolute's experience would not be a *totum simul,* without distinction of beginning and of end. Events and processes would be experienced as uncertain and incomplete because of the alternative possibilities of finite self-determination. It is undoubtedly conceivable that the temporal apprehensions of deity are synoptic and involve complete wholes far beyond the capacities of men. Yet such apprehensions do not *necessarily* preclude the contingency which is the basis of actual freedom. For the Absolute, however, to intuit *all time* in terms of a complet*ed* purpose is certainly to exclude this possibility. Unconditional determinism seems inevitably implicated in such a viewpoint. Pringle-Pattison does endeavor to maintain that time is somehow retained in the Absolute. It is retained, he thinks, in terms of the meaning of events in a total process. Yet this is not

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[51] *Ibid.,* pp. 361-362.

[52] *Ibid.,* pp. 364-365.

the finite experience of events. They are experienced characteristically as separate stages in an incomplete succession. Finite experience and free finite selves are, therefore, unrealities from the standpoint of Pringle-Pattison's view of time.

He is, nevertheless, to be given credit for one of the most insistent efforts to find a satisfactory place for finite individuality within the scheme of things, without sacrificing that scheme. He recognizes that if existence means anything at all finite selfhood must be real. And life is too fraught with significance, from the finite point of view, to admit the contrary possibility. He recognizes, too, that selfhood possesses a groundedness in the very nature of reality and that from this ground there issues an inspiring dynamic. Reality must, therefore, be a unity, and this unity must somehow center in a self. Accordingly, he assumes that the real must be essentially definable as an 'Absolute'. The Absolute, in turn, is other, and much more, than the totality of finite experience, and it cannot be adequately described in terms of mechanism. The only apparent alternative is an organic psychological vitalism, and this our author posits as the essence of his view. He thinks of God as the ground and light of life, and as thus organic to all existence. His God, he admits, cannot contain, or participate in, the experiences of finite selves as such. Strictly, therefore, Pringle-Pattison is not an absolutist. Yet he does endeavor to fit his thought into a frame-work of absolutism, and to that extent he commits his theory to interpretation in terms of pantheism, either of the organic or the abstract type—most particularly the former. For just in so far as he is an actual absolutist, to that very degree is he pantheistic.

IV

THEISTIC SUGGESTIONS

The foregoing conclusions do not mean that every 'absolute' is implicitly pantheistic. One may believe in the existence of absolutes without being a pantheist. To believe, for instance, in the constancy of gravitation, of the velocity of light, or even of some subsistent ends, is to accept a form of absolutism which does not necessarily equate reality with deity. So long as one does not posit a single all-embracing Absolute, pantheism is not necessarily implicated. This is particularly true if one recognizes the existence of variables, as well as constants, in the universe.

One might, indeed, accept the relative supremacy of deity. One can regard God as ultimate, or essentially so, without believing that He is integrally related to *all* existence. One may conceive

of Him as having direct connections with the universe, and actually indwelling it, without presuming that all reality is organic. God's relation to *some* parts of existence may well be indirect, though capable of more immediacy than frequently exists. It is possible, in fact, to conceive of God as approximating 'the Absolute' without being completely such. This view would be *practically* an absolutism, though *theoretically* it would be otherwise.

The idea of God as a relatively *supreme* Being, furthermore, has an especial significance. In the first place, as already stated, it avoids the definitely pantheistic implications of complete absolutism. Secondly, it avoids the negative suggestion in the concept of a 'finite' God. The term 'finite' emphasizes the limitations, rather than the essential supremacy, of deity. It is one-sided in its reference, and its outright adoption, in contradistinction to 'Absolute', overlooks the greatness of deity for which philosophical absolutism stands. There can be no doubt that a God who is not wholly absolute is in at least some respects finite. And to believe in the quasi-independent distinctiveness of human personalities is to recognize some finitude in deity. Yet compared with the finitude of men, animals, and things, God may be considered absolute. He may approximate the Absolute without submerging all existence within his nature. Such a deity would be at once the adequate Object of religious trust and worship and the highest principle of philosophical explanation. Thus one might maintain a view which for practical purposes could be considered 'absolutism' and which would not be pantheistic. Theoretically, however, it would not be actual absolutism, and a better name could surely be devised.

The problem of the conception of deity centers, therefore, in the question as to whether there is a relatively supreme power which makes for righteousness. An intelligible answer to this question depends on the nature of righteousness, and this from the angle of human life most surely involves the most adequate kind of human living. Is the most harmonious and complete life wholly a matter of human achievement, or is it facilitated and fostered by objective circumstance? The evidence is certainly conflicting, and we cannot then maintain that God is equally at work through the entirety of being. The fact that people learn by bitter, and often 'evil', experience is no argument that evil in itself is ultimately good. It is the good in man which enables him to use the bad for his own enlightenment and discipline. He is clearly worse for each surrender to the bad. Yet the circumstances of human lives do inculcate visions of a highest kind of living and move men

to actualize these visions. This is often true though men succumb to lesser ends.

A supra-human righteous Spirit thus attends our lives. We do not know that it has power beyond our world, but it does seem native here and so appears to have a fundamental locus in the universe. Such a Spirit must be relatively supreme. The potency of human values is most intelligible in this light. Yet this does not mean an identity of God and being. Nor does it necessitate an idealistic metaphysic, though this latter is not in question in this thesis.

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